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National Freedom of Information Officer
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW (2822T)
Washington, DC 20460
(202) 566-1667

To Whom It May Concern:

Pursuant to the federal Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552 et seq., I request copies of the following:

- All **emails and associated attachments** in which an email address ending in “@cq.com” or “@cqrollcall.com” is among the sender or recipients (to:, cc:, or bcc:).
 - I request that attachments be provided in their **native formats** and **not converted** to PDFs or any other format.
- I narrow the request to emails sent/received by staff of the **eRulemaking Program Management Office**.
- The timeframe for this request is **Jan. 1, 2014 to the date this search is conducted**.

Under the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, agencies may withhold information “only if . . . disclosure would harm an interest protected by an exemption” or if “disclosure is prohibited by law.” If you withhold any of these records, I request as required by the FOIA that you identify the reasonably foreseeable harm that would result from the release of the records.

The Requestor

I seek these records on behalf of BuzzFeed News. I request to be categorized as a representative of the news media, per 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii). I am a reporter for BuzzFeed News and formerly of the Wall Street Journal. The requested records will inform my reporting and I intend to use these records in my capacity as a reporter.

Request for Expedited Processing and Fee Waiver

Under 28 C.F.R. 16.5(d)(1)(iv), a request is to be given expedited processing when it involves “[a] matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the government’s integrity which affect public confidence.” Accordingly, I am seeking expedited treatment for this request.

This request clearly involves a matter of widespread and exceptional media interest. It seeks records relevant to the mass submission of comments to Regulations.gov. In 2017, widespread concerns were raised regarding the mass submission of comments to FCC Proceeding 17-108 (“Restoring Internet Freedom”). Although that proceeding does not appear to have been handled by the eRulemaking Program, The Wall Street Journal subsequently found similar problems with comments submitted through the eRulemaking / Regulations.gov dockets, such as a docket related to Consumer Financial Protection Bureau proposed rulemaking on payday lending.

¹

The search terms provided relate to one of the entities named in a letter to FCC Inspector General David Hunt from Sens. Richard Blumenthal, Brian Schatz, and Edward J. Markey.²

Further, I request that any fees be waived because disclosure of the responsive records, as demonstrated above, “is in the public interest” as “it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.” (5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii)).

As I am making this request as a journalist and this information is of timely value, I would appreciate you communicating with me by telephone or electronic mail — listed above — rather than by postal mail.

I look forward to your reply within 10 calendar days, as the statute requires. Please let me know if there are any clarifications I can make to make this request easier and/or quicker to complete.

Sincerely,
Jeremy Singer-Vine

¹ <https://www.wsj.com/articles/millions-of-people-post-comments-on-federal-regulations-many-are-fake-1513099188>

² <https://www.blumenthal.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/2018.10.29%20-%20FCC%20-%20Fake%20Comments.pdf>